



Newsletter of the

Ithaca Monthly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

March 2010

IMM CONTACTS

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Send email to lyris@cornell.edu. Leave the subject line blank and include: join IMMRSF-L "Your Name" (include the quotes) in the first line of the body of the message.

Website: ithacamonthlymeeting.org

Events:

If you are interested in setting up or scheduling a program or presentation for our meeting, please see the instructions on the meeting website.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS Due March 25th

Materials for March 28th's newsletter may be submitted by the method of your choice to:

Rini Clarkberg
150 Giles St., Ithaca, NY 14850
279-4722 • mec30@cornell.edu

Meeting Purchases Building

In the middle of January, Meeting's realtor Christa Bissell contacted Friends with information that the building that was formerly the home of the Pangea restaurant was listed for sale at \$180,000. Christa wrote, "It's kind of a mess inside and needs work, but certainly right downtown & has parking. One of the problems is that this seller needs to sell quickly, so not sure your group would have enough time to consider it." The listing for the property is available on the web:

<http://www.laurelguy.com/property/120-Third-Street-Ithaca-New-York>

On Saturday, February 6, several Friends visited the property. On Tuesday, February 9, Steve Mohlke, Clerk, and Tonia Saxon, Assistant Clerk, sent a letter to the IMM listserv titled "What Is Our Ministry?" which opened:

Our Meeting has been given an opportunity to consider a question which we hope will open the way in the search for a meetinghouse. What is our ministry? Where is our Meeting led to serve our community?

This letter was presented and discussed at the February 14 Meeting for Business (see minutes, page XX). Two additional viewings of the property followed on Wednesday the 17th and Friday the 19th, with well over a dozen Friends attending each showing.

On Sunday, February 21, Friends gathered at a Called Meeting for Business to consider the information available on the Madison Street property, whether we are being led to purchase this building and, if ready, whether to make a purchase offer. Gathered Friends were in unity with the decision that Trustees should move forward with the property.

The Trustees of Ithaca Monthly Meeting met the evening of Monday the 22nd. A purchase offer was submitted on Tuesday, and accepted a few hours later. In announcing this event, our clerk wrote to the listserv, "We have a few weeks to make sure that the building can be used in the way we intend and that the renovations and modifications won't be substantially more expensive than our current estimates. If everything checks out OK and goes according to plan we will likely become owners in late April or early May."

Claudia Brenner, architect, has been asked to evaluate the building with respect to our contingencies.

At the February 14th business meeting Meeting also approved holding a second business meeting each month from now through June to focus on meetinghouse issues. As noted in the minutes on page 5 of this newsletter, the dates of business meetings for the next few months are: on Sundays at the rise of Meeting for Worship, March 14 and 28, April 11 and 25, May 2 and 16; Tuesday evening June 1; and Sundays June 13 and 27.

See page 2 for the clerk's reflections on the meetinghouse decision.

Reflections on our decision

— Steve Mohlke, Clerk

Near the end of the Called Meeting last Sunday I felt and shared two seemingly contradictory senses of the Meeting. One was that we had not had enough time together on these questions of location and Meetinghouse—that we had not yet proceeded to real discernment. The other was that I should test with the group whether we were ready to move forward with the purchase of the former Pangea restaurant. I did ask the group about the latter, and the response led to our making a purchase offer on the building. I believe this was the Sense of the Meeting. Yet over the subsequent days I have labored under the realization that we still needed to do the discernment.

Images and metaphors played out in my mind. I saw what has happened over the last several years of Meetinghouse discussions this way. It's as if we have all been walking through the woods together, more or less in the same direction. Sometimes we have been so spread out that we could hardly see each other through the trees. Sometimes we have travelled nearer to each other and to the barely visible path. Knowing that we were coming to an important fork in the road, with this decision before us, many of us gathered together last Sunday. I imagined that at that moment we would be sitting around a campfire, telling our stories and listening deeply to one another. We would talk about who we are as a Meeting, as a people. But that wasn't the reality. The pressure of time and of the chance to purchase the building acted like a storm. It was raining and we couldn't sit around the campfire after all. We had been



120 Third Street, the former Pangea restaurant and possible new home for our Meeting.

walking for a very long time and a storm was coming. We could hear thunder—the thunder of the people in the hallway waiting to use the space we currently occupied. We want to get in out of the rain. The group was ready to make a choice and go with it even if it didn't fit into the clerk's dream of sitting around the camp fire. At that moment, making a decision was more important than the need to sit around the campfire and share our lives and our feelings. One of the paths leading from the fork looked really good. It was time to take a step in that direction.

I think there will be a time and a place to do the sharing we need to do as we move forward. I look forward to hearing from you.

Spiritual Discernment from Ministry & Worship

God often speaks to us quietly from within, and sometimes it can be difficult to discern what is truly a message from the Light. I often experience God's messages as something that gives life, in the best sense of the word. They offer a path forward, a solution to a problem, or energy pulling me in a certain direction. There is a deep rightness about a divine message, a truth, even if I do not want to hear it.

— Expectant Listening:
Finding God's Thread of Guidance
by Michael Wajda, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 388

Updates to Our Website

Friends, have you checked ithacamonthlymeeting.org recently? Some of the recent updates include:

- more photos in the Gallery
- information about conscientious objection
- committee charges for the Scholarship Committee, AFSC Representative, and the Pastoral Care Committee



Announcements

Quaker Talent Show

Just when you thought The Annual Quaker Talent Show *could not* possibly get better, *it just did!*

Make note of the following fantastic improvements:

- When? Sunday, March 21. Yes we really mean *Sunday!*
Where? The Cafe at Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell
What time? Dish-to-pass lunch at the rise of meeting.
Curtain at 1ish (give or take a few)
What talent? Any! Please be thinking about how you would like to express your talents. Set-up? Food? Entertainment? Art? Clean up?

Where do you sign up??? There will be sign up sheets at meeting during the month of March. You may also contact Toni Murdough at tmurdough@juno.com or 273-9037. Bronwyn Mohlke is coordinating the dish to pass; email her at bjm9@cornell.edu.

Quaker Basics Anyone?

The Program Committee is wondering if there is an interest in presenting the Quaker Basics Series. This discussion series covers basics of Quakerism—aka Quakerism 101—beginning with our history, our faith and practice, our testimonies, our service, and anything else along the way. The program has been done in a variety of ways, as a series, weekly for several weeks, as a once a month evening session, or at the rise of meeting over several weeks. Please email or contact Toni Murdough at tmurdough@juno.com or 607-273-9037 with your feedback. We are considering offering the program in April or May. Let us know your preference of times and days.

Pat Sewell has an Article in Spark

Our very own Pat Sewell will have an article appearing in the March edition of the New York Yearly meeting's newsletter *Spark*. The article is titled "Testimonies and the Table" and is about the Testimonies and vegetarianism. Issues of *Spark* are available on line at <http://www.nym.org/spark/>

Interfaith Service Planned as Part of Walk for a Nuclear-Free Future 2010

On March 7, in western New York, Buddhist nun, Sister Jun Yasuda of Grafton, NY, will begin a walk to the United Nations where she plans to arrive on May 3rd. Her travel route will take her through Six Nations Native American Territories, and she plans to stop at sites of nuclear dumping, nuclear power, and the site of the control center for newly deployed unmanned drones. Sister will be coming through Ithaca from March 30 to April 2. She requested that an interfaith service be held while she is in Ithaca. Plans are underway for a service on March 31, at 7:00 PM. Peace Witness Committee and Perry City Meeting will be part of the planning with persons of other faith communities. When details are final, they will be made known via the list serve. Anyone with questions or an interest in working on this can contact Elizabeth Schneider at 273-3566 or neschneid@aol.com.

Join in the Forty Hour Fast

Representing Ithaca Friends on the Religious Taskforce for a Living Wage, Marjorie Baines will be participating in the New York Labor-Religion Coalition's 15th Annual 40 hour fast March 6th-March 8. She welcomes any other Friends who feel so called to participate, all or in part.

The theme this year is "From False Idols to Moral Vision" and the questions for reflection during the fast sound very much like Quaker queries—calling for our economic life to be shaped by moral principles. The "queries" are:

1. Do my economic decisions to buy, sell, invest, divest, hire or fire, serve human dignity and the common good?
2. Do my economic choices contribute to the strength of my family and community, to the values of my children, to the future of those in need?
3. Am I developing a healthy detachment from things and avoiding the temptation to assess who I am by what I have?
4. Am I striking a balance between labor and leisure that enlarges my capacity for friendships, for family, for creativity, for spirituality, for community, and for the earth?
5. What government policies should I support to increase the well being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable?

The fast begins with a shared meal at the Unitarian Church at 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., 306 N. Aurora, and concludes with sharing the community meal offered at Loaves and Fishes, Mon. Mar. 8th at noon, at 210 N. Cayuga St., Ithaca. Marjorie has flyers with more info and details.

Children's Books Needed

Once again, Area Congregations Together (ACT) is working to collect your gently used children's books for the benefit of families in the community. Books can be magic for children, stirring their imaginations—especially important in these days of television and the internet.

Reading is a special time, either reading to oneself or a family time when the reading is aloud. Elspeth Rhodin recalls:

I used to read aloud to the family in the car when we were on trips. One time, driving to Vermont, I was reading aloud from *Tom Sawyer*. At some point, one of the boys kept tapping his father (the driver) on the shoulder, but was brushed off as being an unwanted interruption. Moments later, we heard what our son had anticipated: the siren of a patrol car. We were immediately pulled over. The driver looked at the officer and merely asked if the officer had ever read *Tom Sawyer*, and in particular the part about 'Injun Joe.' The officer nodded, saw the quiet family and let us go.

Can you donate gently used children's books? You can bring them to Meeting or just call Elspeth at 273-7062 and she will gladly pick them up. This is a great service that Friends can provide.

Wonderful Gift to the Library

If you haven't yet experienced tapes from the Teaching Company, you are in for a real treat. These courses covering a huge variety of subjects are organized into 30-45 minute lectures by college professors who have great popularity on their respective campuses. In other words, lots of students who are non-majors sign up for their courses just because the professors make them so very interesting. The Teaching Company records these lectures and then they are available to folks like us so we can listen in our cars or kitchens.

Our meeting has been given a wonderful gift of a set of CDs of the Great World Religions. Our new set includes:

- *Buddhism* with lecturer Malcolm David Eckel who has studied Buddhism most of his adult life. These lectures survey Buddhism from its origin in India in the 6th or 5th centuries B.C.E. to the present day. During its history Buddhism has grown from a tiny religious community into a movement that now spans the globe.
- *Christianity* with lecturer Luke Timothy Johnson, a former Benedictine monk. Professor Johnson provides his definition of religion and explains how Christianity is considered one of the world religions. He describes how Christianity began as a sect of Judaism and grew to dominate the cultural life of Europe. In the 21st century, Christianity appears poised for a renaissance in the developing nations.
- *Hinduism* with lecturer Mark W. Muesse. This is the world's oldest living religious tradition with roots deep in the early cultures of India. The course explores how Hinduism of very un-Western traditions – arranged marriages and the caste system – has survived and thrived for thousands of years. Its terms and practices – karma, Krishna, yoga, guru – have found a home in Western lives and language.
- *Islam* with lecturer John L. Esposito. Islam is the world's second largest and fastest growing religion. This course helps provide an understanding of Islam's role as both a religion and a way of life and its deep impact on world affairs both historically and today.
- *Judaism* with lecturer Isaiah M. Gafni of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The lectures of this course examine Judaism from within – as it was understood by its adherents in the past and by those who practice or identify with Judaism today. The critical stages of Jewish history are explored as well as the manner in which the Jewish calendar and Jewish law define daily life.

Each of these courses consists of twelve lectures. Available for borrowing, they are shelved in the Meditation Room in the Burt House.

In Our Community

Four Friends in *The Little Prince* at Ithaca College

There is still time in March to see youth from our Meeting (Laurel Wolf, Sarah Saxon, Britta Goncarovs, and Elsa Mohlke) featured in *The Little Prince* at Ithaca College. For information on buying tickets, call the Ithaca College ticket office (274-3224) or Ticket Center Ithaca (273-4497). March performances are:

- Tuesday, March 2, 8p
- Thursday, March 4, 8p
- Saturday, March 6, 8p

Five Friends in *Thoughtfully Modern Millie*

Rosie Altucher, Andris Goncarovs, Emily Murphy, Tommy Murphy, and Laurel Wolf will appear in the Lehman Alternative School musical production at the BJM Library Theater:

- Friday, March 26, 7p
- Saturday, March 27, 2p
- Saturday, March 27, 7p

Group for Adult Adoptees Forming

In a response to a need in our community for adult adoptees to be able to share their struggles and triumphs in understanding the impact this invisible aspect of life has on their lives and behaviors, there is proposal to establish a new group. The group would meet every other Thursday, beginning in March, at the Wellness Center at Community Corners. Please call for more information and to set up an interview appointment if you are interested. You can contact Clare Nicholetti at 272-8572 or claren919@yahoo.com, or Theresa Wagner Teresa at 227-1026 or wagner@twcny.rr.com

Talking Circle on Racism Forming

The Multi-Cultural Resource Center is interested in seeking out members of faith-based communities who would like to participate in a Talking Circle on Racism. If you are interested, please contact Liz Field at the Multi-Cultural Resource Center (607) 272-2292 ext 135 or by email at lizfield@cornell.edu. Be sure to let her know that you are responding as part of a faith-based community.

BJM Container Garden

BJM Elementary is planning to start an edible learning garden. The designated spot for raised beds is on what is now asphalt, which the district will break up sometime around May. In the meantime, they are interested in doing an "urbanized" container garden on the playground, using recycled containers from the community.

Do you have anything you think they could use? Anything goes (metal preferred, wood not preferred). Old horse troughs would be perfect! Contact the BJM Garden Team through Audrey Zelda Baker (Cornell Class of 2009), 215-872-6163, audreyzelda@gmail.com.

Minutes of the February 14 Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Ithaca Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Steve Mohlke, Clerk

Tonia Saxon, Assistant Clerk

Marilyn Ray and Nancy Gabriel, Co-Recording Clerk

Mike Simkin, Treasurer

(The @ signifies that the minute has been read and approved during Meeting. Please note that copies of all report provided during this Meeting are on file with and available from the Recording Clerk.)

201002.1 Gathering. The Ithaca Monthly Meeting (IMM) of the Religious Society of Friends met on February 14, 2010, in the Cafe, Anabel Taylor Hall, Cornell University, for Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. At 12:30 p.m., 27 Friends settled into worship. Into the silence, the Memorial Minute for Bonnie Tyler was read. During the open worship which followed, Friends spoke of service to community and to Meeting, and of the enduring lessons left in our hearts by this departed Friend.

Clerk reviewed the published agenda for today's meeting, and introduced the Friends who are holding the Meeting in the Light during our Worship with Attention to Business: Carolyn Kenyon, Elspeth Rhodin, and Helen Schantz. @

201002.2 Ministry and Oversight Committee (M & O). Clerk began by asking Wendy Wolfe to reread the Memorial Minute for Bonnie Tyler, so that Friends could consider approval of this minute. It was APPROVED. Wendy continued with the committee's report.

After the request from November business meeting, M&O considered the use of "Oversight" in its title in the light of negative historical associations with that word. The committee proposed changing its title to "Ministry and Worship (M & W)", and after discussion this change was APPROVED.

The committee is taking steps to prepare our meeting room for worship on First Days. Carolyn Kenyon is coordinating the effort to ensure that a few Friends will arrive early and settle into worship, holding the room in readiness as attenders arrive. Any Friends who would commit to this service should contact Carolyn.

Another Ministry and Worship initiative is to take measures to welcome and integrate new attenders, such as compiling a "glossary" of Quaker terminology which may be unclear and encouraging social interaction by, e.g. setting up a new round of "Quaker Eights". Meeting received the report. @

201002.3 Pastoral Care Committee. Bronwyn Mohlke introduced the current members of this new committee: Kathy Beissner, Marion DaGrossa, Bronwyn Mohlke, and Emily Williams, with Carolyn Kenyon acting as liaison with Ministry and Worship. Bronwyn reviewed the history of the creation of the committee, and read its charge which was approved in December 2009. The committee is preparing a questionnaire to compile information on how Friends would offer help to people in a time of emotional, spiritual, or material need. All Friends are urged to contact a member of Pastoral Care if they themselves are in need or know of someone who is. Meeting received the report. @

201002.4 Treasurer gave the monthly report, which Meeting received. @

201002.5 Meetinghouse. Clerk began today's deliberations by reminding us of recent Minutes (from September, October, and December 2009) relating to financial information about available resources for a possible meetinghouse. He asked: are we ready to ask the Finance Committee to rewrite the report requested last September deleting all references to the option of selling the Burr House? Discussion revealed that Friends are not clear, so revising the Finance report is laid over for a future meeting.

Our attention then turned to the query asked in the letter sent out by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk on February 9, 2010: What is our ministry? While aware that of considering this query in the context of the possibility of a downtown meetinghouse, we were clear that today's sharing is not meant to lead to a decision. Tonia Saxon read excerpts from the Clerks' letter, to help center our worship. Friends spoke to the query, and listened to one another and to the Spirit moving among us.

When Friends felt ready, we shifted our focus to what steps should be taken with reference to the downtown property under consideration. Clerk read some cautionary words about this building from a Friend who had visited it but was not able to be present today. Clerk stated his sense that as many as possible of us should visit the site. For pragmatic reasons, this needs to be done very soon. He proposed several steps: arranging to see the site, getting details on the property's legal status, seeking knowledgeable advice about structural constraints, code criteria, etc. Other Friends added their thoughts to these concerns.

Meeting APPROVED having the Clerk and Assistant Clerk proceed to gather information and resources and to arrange for Friends to visit the property. Those who go to site visits are invited to meet afterwards at the nearby home of Emily Williams and Alexa Yesukevitch for informal conversations. Further, we will hold a Called Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business at the rise of Meeting for Worship next week, February 21st, at which we will receive information that has been gathered up to that time, and we will be open to making decisions then about how to proceed further on whatever Unity may be reached. All friends are asked to send input to the Clerk or Assistant Clerk. @

201002.6 Next business meetings. Clerk proposed, and Meeting APPROVED, holding a second business meeting to focus on meetinghouse issues, each month from now until June. We will decide in June whether additional business meetings continue to be necessary. The dates of business meetings for the next few months are: on Sundays at the rise of Meeting for Worship, February 21, March 14 and 28, April 11 and 25, May 2 and 16; Tuesday evening June 1; and Sundays June 13 and 27. @

At 3:00 24 Friends entered into silent worship before adjourning.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Gabriel, co-Recording Clerk

Advices & Queries from NYYM Faith & Practice

Advice 16. *Friends' business meetings are meetings for worship with a concern for business. When there seems to be disagreement, a free expression of all opinions should be encouraged. Those who speak in meetings for business are advised not to be unduly persistent in advocacy or opposition, but, after having fully expressed their views, to recognize the generally expressed sense*

of the meeting. A deep and seeking silence can help to reconcile seemingly opposing points of view. Meetings should be conducted in the spirit of wisdom, forbearance, and love.

Query 1. *Are meetings for worship and business held in expectant waiting for divine guidance? Are we regular and punctual in attendance? Are we willing and faithful in the service of our meeting and in financial support of its activities?*

March 2009 Calendar of Ithaca Monthly Meeting

Please also see the on-line calendar at <http://ithacamonthlymeeting.org/calendar/>

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business Sunday, March 14, Rise of Meeting

Agenda items should be provided to Steve Mohlke, clerk, by Wednesday the March 10. (Contact information is on page 1, left column.)

Women's Fellowship Friday, March 19, 7p

Great news: The Giving Tree restaurant works well out well for our fellowship event (if not for parking). Please join us at 7pm in the space formerly occupied by ABC Cafe at 310 Stewart Avenue. All are welcome. Have dinner or tea or baked goods... or not.

Peace Witness Committee Saturday, March 20, 10:30a

Join Peace Witness Committee at the Burtt House. This is an open committee and all are welcome. If you have ideas for the Committee but cannot attend, please feel free to contact Elizabeth Schneider at 273-3566 or neschneid@aol.com

Quaker Talent Show Sunday, March 21, 1p

The Annual Quaker Talent Show will be on Sunday afternoon this year, following Meeting for Worship. Bring a dish-to-pass if you are able to. See page 3 for more information about this event!

Meeting's Resources for Children: Open House Sunday, March 21, 9:30a

Children and the Life of the Meeting (CALM) invites everyone to come to the cafe in Anabel Taylor Hall to take a look at the books and materials available for use with the children of our meeting. We have many good resource materials that we would like you to know about. Refreshments and good cheer will be available!

Meeting for Healing Tuesday, March 23, 7:15p

A Meeting for Healing is held at 7:15 on the fourth Tuesday of every month at Melody Johnson and Dick Crepeau's house (112 Mount Pleasant Road). If you have a concern but cannot attend, let Melody know and you will be held in the Light. For more information, call Melody at 272-8755.

Called Meeting to Focus on Meetinghouse Issues Sunday, March 28, Rise of Meeting

More details on the agenda should be available by Thursday the 25th. If you have questions or need more information, contact Steve Mohlke, clerk. (Contact information is on page 1, left column.)

Upcoming in April:

Easter: April 4th

Easter brunch at Marion & Nancy's: April 4th

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business:
April 11th & April 25th

Every Sunday

11:00a **Meeting for Worship** for all ages (note: on October 4th, Meeting for Worship begins at 10:30a)

11:15a Children are invited to join **First Day School** classes gathering outside the Edwards Room

Other Weekly IMM Events

Wed 7:30p **Midweek meeting** for worship at the Burtt House

Thurs 5-5:30p **Peace Vigil** at the bottom of East State Street near the Community School for Music and Arts